

419 THE 3
GLORY
OF A
TRUE CHURCH,
And its
Discipline display'd.

Wherein a true Gospel-Church
is described.

Together with the Power of the
Keys, and who are to be let
in, and who to be shut out.

By BENJAMIN KEACH.

Mat. 18. 18. *Whatsoever ye shall bind
on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven;
and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth,
shall be loosed in Heaven.*

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THE GLORY

OF THE CHURCH

Discipline displayed

We are a true Gospel Church
is displayed

Together with the Power of the
keys, and who are to be let
in, and who are to be out.

By S. J. VAUGHAN

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To the Baptized Churches,
particularly to that under
my Care.

My Brethren,

EVery House or Building consisteth both of Matter and Form: And so doth the Church of Christ, or House of the Living God,

The Matter or Materials with which it is built are Lively Stones, i.e. Converted Persons: Also the Matter and Form must be according to the Rule and Pattern shewed in the Mount, I mean Christ's Institution, and the Apostolical Churches Constitution, and not after Mens Inventions.

Now some Men, because the Typical Church of the Jews was National and took in their Carnal Seed (as such) therefore the same Matter and Form they would have under the Gospel.

But tho a Church be rightly built in both these respects, i.e. of fit Matter and right Form, yet without a regular and orderly Discipline, it will

soon lose its Beauty, and be polluted.

Many Reverend Divines of the Congregational way, have written most excellently (it is true) upon the Subject, I mean on Church-Discipline; but the Books are so voluminous that the Poorer Sort can't purchase them, and many others have not Time or Learning enough to improve them to their Profit; and our Brethren the Baptists have not written (as I can gather) on this Subject by it self. Therefore I have been earnestly desired by our Members, and also by one of our Pastors, to write a small and plain Tract concerning the Rules of the Discipline of a Gospel-Church: that all Men may not only know our Faith, but see our Order in this case also. True, this (tho plain) is but short, but may be it may provoke some other Person to do it more fully. Certainly, ignorance of the rules of Discipline causes no small trouble and disorders in our Churches; and if this may be a Prevention, or prove profitable to any, let God have the Glory, and I have my End: Who am, Yours

Aug. 18.
1697.

Benj. Keach.

The Glory of a Gospel-
Church, and the true
Orderly Discipline
thereof explain'd.

*Concerning a True and Orderly
Gospel-Church.*

BEfore there can be any Or-
derly Discipline among a
Christian Assembly, they
must be orderly and regu-
larly constituted into a Church-
state, according to the Institution
of Christ in the Gospel.

1. A Church of Christ, accord- *Aff. 2. 41,*
ing to the Gospel-Institution, is a *42, 43, 44.*
Congregation of Godly Christians, *Aff. 8. 14.*
who as a Stated-Assembly (being *Aff. 19. 4,*
first baptized upon the Profession *5, 6.*
of Faith) do by mutual agreement *Eph. 1. 1,*
and consent give themselves up to *2. and 3.*
the *12, 13, 19.*

Col. 1.2,4, the Lord, and one to another, according to the Will of God; and
 12. do ordinarily meet together in one
 1 Pet. 2. 5. Place, for the Publick Service and
 Aft. 5. 13. Worship of God; among whom
 14. the Word of God and Sacraments
 Rom. 6. 17. are duly administred, according
 Heb. 6. 1,2. to Christ's Institution.

2. The Beauty and Glory of
 Rom. 6. 3, which Congregation doth consist
 4, 5. in their being all Converted Persons, or *living Stones*; being by the
 1 Pet. 2.4, Holy Spirit, united to Jesus Christ
 5, 6. the Precious Corner-Stone, and
 Eph. 2.20, the only foundation of every Christian,
 21. as well as of every particular Congregation, and of the whole
 Col. 2. 19. *Catholick Church*.

3. That every Person before they are admitted Members, in such a Church so constituted, must declare to the Church (or to such with the Pastor, that they shall appoint) what God hath done for their Souls, or their Experiences of a Saving work of Grace upon their Hearts; and also the Church should
 Psal. 65. 16. enquire after, and take full satisfaction concerning their Holy Lives,
 Aft. 11. 4, 5, 6, &c. or Good Conversations.
 23, 24.
 1 Pet. 2. 15.
 2 Cor. 8. 5.
 Jer. 50. 5.

And

and its Discipline explain'd.

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And when admitted Members, before the Church they must solemnly enter into a Covenant, to walk in the Fellowship of that particular Congregation, and submit themselves to the Care and Discipline thereof, and to walk faithfully with God in all his Holy Ordinances, and there to be fed and have Communion, and worship God there, when the Church meets (if possible) and give themselves up to the watch and charge of the Pastor and Ministry thereof: the Pastor then also signifying in the name of the Church their acceptance of each Person, and endeavour to take the care of them, and to watch over them in the Lord, (the Members being first satisfied to receive them, and to have Communion with them.) And so the Pastor to give them the right Hand of Fellowship of a Church, or *Church Organical*.

Heb. 13. 17.

1 Pet. 5. 1.

2.

A Church thus constituted ought forthwith to choose them a Pastor, Elder or Elders, and Deacons, (we reading of no other Officers, or Offices abiding in the Church)

Of an O.

ganical

Church.

1 Tim. 3:2, and what kind of Men they ought
 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. to be, and how qualified, is laid
 Tit. 1. 5, 6, down by Paul to Timothy, and to
 7, 8, 9, 10. Titus. Moreover, they are to take
 special care, that both Bishops,
 Overseers, or Elders, as well as the
 Deacons, have in some competent
 manner all those Qualifications;
 and after in a Day of solemn Prayer
 and Fasting, that they have elected
 them, (whether Pastor, &c. or
 Deacons) and they accepting the
 Office, must be ordained with
 Prayer, and laying on of Hands of
 the Eldership; being first prov'd,
 and found meet and fit Persons for
 so Sacred an Office: Therefore
 such are very disorderly Churches
 who have no Pastor or Pastors or-
 dained, they acting not according
 to the Rule of the Gospel, having
 something wanting.

Tit. 1. 7.

Act. 6. 6.

1 Tim. 5. 22.

*Of the work of a Pastor, Bishop
 or Overseer.*

1. **T**HE work of a Pastor is to
 preach the Word of Christ,
 or to feed the Flock, and to admini-
 ster all the Ordinances of the Gospel
 which

1 Cor. 9.
 16, 17.

which belong to his Sacred Office, *Act. 20. 31*
 and to be faithful and laborious *35.*
 therein, studying to shew himself
 approved unto God, a *Work-man* *2 Tim. 2. 15.*
that needeth not be ashamed, rightly
dividing the Word of Truth. He *2 Cor. 4.*
 is a *Steward of the Mysteries of* *1, 2.*
God, therefore ought to be a Man *1 Tim. 3.*
 of good Understanding and Expe-
 rience, being sound in the Faith,
 and one that is acquainted with
 the Mysteries of the Gospel: Be-
 cause he is to *feed the People with* *Jer. 3. 15.*
Knowledge and Understanding. He
 must be faithful and skilful to de-
 clare the Mind of God, and dili- *2 Tim. 4. 2.*
 gent therein, also to *preach in sea-*
son and out of season; God having
 committed unto him the Ministry *2 Cor. 5. 18.*
 of Reconciliation, a most choice
 and sacred Trust. What Interest
 hath God greater in the World
 which he hath committed unto
 Men than this? Moreover, he must
 make known the whole Counsel of *Act. 20. 20,*
 God to the People. *27.*

2. A Pastor is to visit his Flock, *Pro. 27. 23.*
 to know *their state,* and to watch *1 Thess. 5.*
over them, to support the weak, and
to strengthen the feeble-minded, and

A S luc

To The Glory of a True Church,

succour the tempted, and to reprove them that are unruly.

3. To pray for them at all times, and with them also when sent for, and desired, and as Opportunity serves; and to sympathize with them in every State and Condition, with all Love and Compassion.

1 Tim. 4. 12. 4. And to shew them in all respects, as near as he can, a good Example in Conversation, Charity, Faith and Purity; that his Ministry may be the more acceptable to all, and the Name of God be glorified, and Religion delivered from Reproach.

5. He must see he carries it to Jam. 2. 4. all with all Impartiality, not preferring the Rich above the Poor, 1 Tim. 5. 21. nor lord it over God's Heritage, 1 Pet. 5. 3. nor assume any greater Power than and 5. 6. God hath given him; but to shew a humble and meek Spirit, nay to be clothed with Humility.

The Office and Work of Deacons.

The Deacons Work.

THE Work of Deacons is to serve Tables, viz. to see to 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, provide for the Lord's Table, the Mini- 10.

and its Discipline explain'd.

IT

Minister's Table, and the Poor's *Acts 3. 7, 8, 9, 10.*
Table. (1.) They should provide Bread and Wine for the Lord's Table. (2.) See that every Member contributes to the Maintenance of the Ministry, according to their Ability, and their own voluntary Subscription or Obligation. *1 Cor. 16. 2.*
(3.) That each Member do give weekly to the Poor, as God has blessed him. (4.) Also visit the Poor, and know their Condition as much as in them lies; that none, especially the aged Widows, be neglected. *Acts 6. 1.*

Of the Duty of Church-Members to their Pastor.

IT IS the Duty of every Member to pray for their Pastor and Teachers. *Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run and be glorified. Again, saith Paul, Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the Mystery of Christ. Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him.* They that neglect this Duty seem
1 Thess. 5. 25. Heb. 13. 18.

seem not to care either for their Minister, or their own Souls, or whether Sinners be converted, and the Church edified or not. They pray for their daily Bread, and will they not pray to have the Bread of Life plentifully broken to them?

Motives to this.

1. Ministers Work is great:
2 Cor. 2. 16. *Who is sufficient for these things?*

1 Cor. 16. 9. 2. The Opposition is not small which is made against them.

1 Tim. 4. 3, 4, 5. 3. God's loud Call is (as well as Ministers themselves) for the Saints continual Prayers and Supplication for them.

4. Their Weakness and Temptations are many.

5. The Increase and Edification of the Church depends upon the Success of their Ministry.

6. If they fall or miscarry, God is greatly dishonoured, and his Ways and People reproached.

2 Cor. 3. 19, 20. 2dly. They ought to shew a reverential Estimation of them, be-

ing Christ's Ambassadors, also called Rulers, Angels, &c. they that honour them, and receive them, honour

honour and receive Jesus Christ.

Esteem them very highly in Love 1 Thess. 3:
for their Work sake. Again, he 13.

said, *Let the Elders that rule well,*
be accounted worthy of double Ho- 1 Tim. 5:17.
nour, especially they who labour in
Word and Doctrine: that is, as I
conceive, such that are most labo-
rious.

3dly. 'Tis their Duty to submit
themselves unto them, that is, in
all their Exhortations, good Coun-
sels and Reproofs; and when they
call to any extraordinary Duty,
as Prayer, Fasting, or days of
Thanksgiving, if they see no just
cause why such days should not be
kept, they ought to obey their
Pastor or Elder, as in other cases
also. *Obeys them that have the Rule* Heb. 13. 5,
over you, and submit your selves. 17.

4thly. It is their Duty to take
care to vindicate them from the
unjust Charges of evil Men, or
Tongue of Infamy, and not to take
up a Reproach against them by Jer. 20. 10.
report, nor to grieve their Spirits, Zeph. 2. 8.
or weaken their Hands, 2 Cor. 11.
21, 23.

5thly. 'Tis the Duty of Members
to go to them when under Trouble
or Temptations. 6thly.

Gally. It is their Duty to provide a comfortable Maintenance for them and their Families, suitable to their State and Condition. Let
Gal. 6. 6. him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things. Who goeth a Warfare at his own Charge? who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? &c. Even so hath
1Cor. 9. 7, 8. the Lord ordained, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? They should minister to them cheerfully with all readiness of Mind. Ministers are not to ask for their Bread, but to receive it honourably. The Ministers Maintenance, tho it is not by Tythes, &c. as under the Law, yet they have now as just a right to a comfortable Maintenance as they had then; the equity of the Duty is the same:
Mat. 10. 9, See Dr. Our Saviour, faith Dr. Owen, and
10. Owen's E- the Apostles plead it from grounds
22. *shod, p. 21,* of Equity and Justice; and all kind
 of Laws and Rules of Righteousness among Men of all sorts calls for it.

and its Discipline explain'd.

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7thly. It is their Duty to adhere to them, and abide by them in all their Trials and Persecutions for ² Tim. 4. the Word. *Ye were not ashamed* 16, 17, 18. *of me in my Bonds, &c.*

8thly. Dr. Owen adds another *Esbo*, pag. 27. Duty of the Members to their Pastor, viz. to agree to come together upon his Appointment: *When they were come, and had gathered the Church together, &c.* Act. 14. 27.

Query, *Are there no ruling Elders besides the Pastor?*

Ans^r. There might be such in the Primitive Apostolical Church, but we see no ground to believe it an abiding Office to continue in the Church, but was only temporary.

1. Because we have none of the Qualifications of such Elders mention'd, or how to be chosen.

2. Because we read not particularly what their Work and Business is, or how distinct from preaching Elders; tho we see not but the Church may (if she sees meet) choose some able and discreet Brethren to be *Helps in Government*: Rom. 12. 8. We have the Qualifications of Bishops

1 Tim. 3. Shops and Deacons directly laid down, and how to be chosen, and
Tit. 1. 5, 6, 7. their Work declared, but of no other Office or Officers in the Church, but these only.

Quest. May an Elder of one Church if called, warrantably administer all Ordinances to another?

Ans. No surely; for we find no
Act. 20. 17, 27, 28. warrant for any such Practice, he being only ordained Pastor or Elder of that particular Church that chose him, &c. and hath no Right or Authority to administer as an Elder in any other where he is not so much as a Member.

Quest. May a Church call out a Teacher that is no ordained Elder to administer all Ordinances to them?

Ans. You may as well ask, May a Church act disorderly? Why were Ministers to be ordained, if others unordained might warrantably do all their Work? if therefore they have no Person fitly qualified for that Office, they must look out from abroad for one that is. Yet (as we say) Necessity has no Law; provided therefore they can't do either, it is better their Teacher be

be called to do it, than that the Church should be without their Food, and Church-Ordinances neglected; yet let all Churches take care to organize themselves, and not through Covetousness, or neglect of Duty, rest incomplete Churches, and so under Sin. God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion, in all the Churches of the Saints. And how severely did God deal of old with such that meddled with the Priests Work and Office, who were not of the Priesthood, nor called by him to administer in holy things!

1 Cor. 14.
33, 38.

Of the reception of Members.

Quest. **W**hat is the Order of receiving Members into the Church, that were no Members any where before?

Ans. 1. The Person must give an account of his Faith, and of the Work of Grace upon his Soul before the Church; and also a strict Enquiry must be made about his Life and Conversation: but if through Bashfulness the Party cannot speak before the Congregation,

Of the reception of Members into the Church.

Psal. 66. 16.

Acts 9. 26,

27.

3 Joh. 9. 10.

Rom. 14.

17, 19.

1 Pet. 3. 15.

1Cor. 14. 40. on, the Elder and two or three more Persons may receive an account of his or her Faith, and report it to the Church. But if full Satisfaction by the Testimony of good and credible Persons is not given of the Party's Life and Conversation, he must be put by *Acts 11. 2.* until Satisfaction is obtained in *3, 4, 5, 6.* that respect. Moreover, when the Majority are satisfied, and yet one or two Persons are not, the Church and Elder will do well to wait a little time, and endeavour to satisfy such Persons, especially if the Reasons of their dissent seem weighty.

Quest. What is to be done when a Person offers himself for Communion from a Church that is corrupt, or erroneous in Principles?

Ans. 1. The Church ought to take an account of his Faith in all Fundamental Points, and of the Work of Grace upon his Heart.

2. And if satisfied, then to send also to that corrupt People, to know whether they have any thing or not against his Life and Conversation: if satisfied in both these respects, the Church may receive him.

Quest.

and its Discipline explain'd.

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Quest. To whom is it Members To whom
join themselves? is it to the Elder, Members
or to the Church? join them-
selves.

Ans^r. They are joined to the whole Community of the Church, being incorporated as Members thereof, and thereto abide, tho the Pastor be removed by Death. *Act. 2. 47. & 5. 11, 13.*

The Power of the Keys, with Church-- Discipline, and Members Duties one to another.

WE judg it necessary that a Day monthly be appointed particularly for Discipline, and not to manage such Affairs on the Lord's-day, which should be spent in the publick Worship of God, of different nature: besides, such things may (on the account of Discipline) come before the Church which may not be expedient to be heard on the Lord's-day, lest it disturb the Spirits of any Members, and hinder their Meditation in the Word which they have newly heard: tho in small Congregations

A monthly day to be appointed for Discipline.

gregations perhaps a day in two or three Months may be sufficient.

*The Power
of the Keys
committed
to the
Church.*

Acts 16.5.

2 Theff. 1.

3, 6.

2. The Power of the Keys, or to receive in and shut out of the Congregation, is committed unto the Church: The Political Power of Christ, saith Dr. Chauncy, is in the Church, whereby it is exercised in the Name of Christ, having all lawful Rule and Government within it self, which he thus proves, viz.

1. The Church essential is the first Subject of the Keys.

2. They must of necessity to their Preservation, purge themselves from all pernicious Members.

3. They have Power to organize themselves with Officers. Yet I humbly conceive I may add, that the Concurrence of the Presbytery is needful hereunto.

4. If need be that they call an Officer from without, or one of another Church, they must first admit him a Member, that they may ordain their Officer from among themselves.

5. They have Power to reject a scandalous Pastor from Office and Membership.

This

' This Power of Christ is exerted as committed to them by the Hands of the Elder appointed by Christ, the due management whereof is in and with the Church to be his Care and Trust, as a Steward, whereof he is accountable to Christ and the Church, not lording it over God's Heritage. And that the Power of the Keys is in the Church, appears to me from *Mat. 18. If he will not hear the Church*; it is not said, if he will not hear the Elder, or Elders. As also that of the Apostle, in directing the Church to cast out the Incestuous Person, he doth not give this Counsel to the Elder or Elders of the Church, but to the Church; so he commands the Church to withdraw from every Brother that walks disorderly. *Purge out the old Leaven, that you may be a new Lump.*

Dr. Chauncy on the Power of the Keys, p. 335.

1 Cor. 5.4, 5.

2 Thess. 3. 6, 14.

1 Cor. 5.7.

Of Church-Censures.

NOW as to Church-Censures *Of Church-Censures.*
I understand but two besides Suspension, *viz.* (1.) Withdrawing from a Member that walks disorderly.

The Glory of a True Church,
 disorderly. (2.) Casting out, or
 Excommunicating such that are
 other guilty of notorious or scan-
 dalous Crimes, of Heresy, &c. or
 of contemning the Authority of
 the Church.

Briefly to each of these.

1. Suspension is to be when a
 Member falls under Sin, and the
 Church wants time fully to hear
 the matter, and so can't withdraw
 from him, or cast him out.

2. If any Member walks disor-
 derly, tho not guilty of gross scan-
 dalous Sins, he or she, as soon as it is
 taken notice of, ought to be ad-
 monished, and endeavours to be
 used to bring him to Repentance.

2 Thess. 3. For we hear that there are some
11, 12. which walk disorderly, not working
at all, but are busy-bodies. Such
 as meddle with Matters that con-
 cern them not, it may be (instead
 of following their Trade and Bu-
 siness) they go about from one
 Member's House to another, tel-
 ling or carrying of Tales and Sto-
 ries of this Brother, or of that
 Brother or Sister, which perhaps
 may be true, or perhaps false, and
 may

may be too to the Reproach or Scandal of some Member or Members, which, if so, it is back-biting; and that is so notorious a Crime, that without Repentance they shall not ascend God's holy Hill. Back-biting is a diminishing our Neighbours, or Brother's good Name, either by denying him his due Praise, or by saying any thing to his Charge falsely or irregularly, or without sufficient cause or evidence, *Thus our Annotators.* But this of disorderly walking does not amount to such a Crime, but Evils not so notorious; Now *them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own Bread.* They must be admonished.

1. An Admonition is a faithful Endeavour to convict a Person of a Fault, both as to Matter of Fact and Circumstance; and this Admonition must be given first, if it be private, by that Brother that knows or has knowledg of the Fault or Evil of the Person offending, whether the Elder, or Member; for any

Ps. 15. 1, 3.

2 Thess. 3. 12.

any private Brother ought to admonish such with all care and faithfulness before he proceeds farther. But if it be publick, the Church ought to send for the Offender, and the Pastor must admonish him before all.

2. But if after all due Endeavours used he is not reclaimed, but continues a disorderly Person, the Church must withdraw from him.

2 Thess. 2. 6. Now we command you Brethren, in Disorderly Members only to bewithdrawn from. *the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Traditions he received from us.* This is not a delivering

up to Satan, Excommunicating or dismembring the Person; for this sort are still to be owned as Members, tho disorderly ones: the Church must note him so as not to have Communion or Company with him in that sense; yet

2 Thess. 2. 14, 15. *him not as an Enemy, but exhort him as a Brother: if any Man obey not our Word, note that Man.*

It appears that such who refuse to adhere to what the Pastor commands and exhorts to, in the Name

of Christ, are to be deemed disorderly Persons, as such are who meet Heb. 12. 25. not with the Church when assembled together to worship God, or that neglect private or family Prayer, or neglect their attendance on the Lord's Supper, or to contribute to the necessary Charges of the Church, or suffer any Evils unreproved in their Children; all such may be lookt upon disorderly Walkers, and ought to be proceeded against according to this Rule, or divulge the private Resolves of the Church, as well as in many like cases.

Of private Offences of one Brother against another.

AS touching private Offences, *Of private* the Rule *Mat. 18.* is to be *Offences be-* observed, only this by the way *tween Bro-* must be premised, *viz.* if but one *ther and* Brother or two have the knowledge *Brother.* of some Members Crime, yet if it be publicly known to the World, and the Name of God be reproach-

ed, it being an immoral Act, a private Brother is not to proceed with such an Offender, according to *Mat. 18.* but forthwith to bring it to the Church, that the public Scandal may be taken off.

2. But if it be a private Offence or Injury done to a Brother or Sister in particular, and not being a notorious scandalous Sin, that Brother must not mention it to one Soul, either within, or without the Church, until he hath proceeded according to the Rule.

(1.) He must tell his Brother his Fault. *Mat. 18. 15.* *Moreover, if thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault betwixt thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother.*

Thou must labour in Love and all Affections to convince him of his Fault; but if he will not hear thee,

(2.) Thou must take one or two more, but besure see they are discreet Persons, and such that are most likely to gain upon him; and they with thee are to labour with all Wisdom to bring him to the sense

sense of his Fault: 'tis not just to speak to him, as if that were enough; no, no, but to take all due Pains, and to strive to convince him, that so the matter may be issued, and the Church not troubled with it; *But if he will not hear thee, take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witnesses every word may be established.* Mat. 18. 16.

3. But if he will not hear them after all due Means and Admonitions used, then it must be brought to the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, he must be cast out: The Elder is to put the Question, whether the offending Brother be in their Judgments incorrigible, and refuseth to hear the Church; which passing in the Affirmative by the Vote of the Congregation, or the Majority of the Brethren by the lifting up of their Hands, or by their Silence; the Pastor after calling upon God, and opening the nature of the Offence, and the Justness of their Proceedings, in the Name and by the Authority of Christ,

Dr. Chauncy, P. 345.

The Sisters are not to vote in the Church.

pronounces the Sentence of Excommunication to this effect.

The Act
of Excom-
munica-
tion or
Church-
Censure.

1 Cor. 5.

That A. B. being guilty of great Iniquity, and not manifesting unfeigned Repentance, but refusing to hear the Church, I do in the Name, and by the Authority of Christ committed unto me as Pastor of this Church, pronounce and declare that he is to be, and is hereby excommunicated, excluded or cast out of the Congregation, and no longer to be owned a Brother, or a Member of this Church; and this for the destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And this we believe is the substance of that which the Apostle calls a delivering up to Satan, he being cast into the World, which is called the Kingdom of Satan, where he rules and reigns.

Pag. 345. 'The delivery unto Satan (saith Dr. Chauncy) signifies only the solemn Exclusion of a Person from the Communion of the Church, the visible Kingdom of Christ, and disfranchizing him, or divesting him of all visible Right to Church Privileges, casting him

him into the Kingdom of the World, where the Prince of Darkness rules in the Children of disobedience. And this being done, he is to be esteemed to be no better than an Heathen Man, or Publican, or as an evil Person, and not to have so much as intimate civil Communion withal. Mat. 18. 17.

Of Scandalous Persons guilty of gross Acts of Immorality.

IF any Member fall into any gross Acts of Sin, as Swearing, Lying, Drunkenness, Fornication, Covetousness, Extortion, or the like, and it is known and publickly spread abroad to the great scandal and reproach of Religion, and of the Holy Name of God, his Church, and People; the said Offender so charged, the Church must send one or two Brethren to him to come before the Congregation: if he will not come, but doth slight and contemn the Authority of the Church, that will bring farther Guilt upon him, for which Offence he incurs

Of Scandalous Crimes or Evils.

*The Church
Censure on
notorious
Offenders
is the same
with that
in Mat. 18.*

the Censure before-mentioned. But if he doth appear, his Charge is to be laid before him, and the Witnesses called; and after he has made his Defence, and said all he hath to say, and the Congregation finds him Guilty, then the same Censure is to pass upon him, to the end he may be brought to unfeigned Repentance, and the Name of God cleared; and some time must be taken to make it appear that he hath true Repentance, by the Reformation of his Life and holy walking afterwards, before he be received again, and the Censure of the Church in a solemn manner be taken off.

Pag. 343.

Dr. Chauncy puts this Question,

Quest. 'How is a Church to proceed in case of open and notorious Scandals?

'The Answer is, 'the matter of Fact, as such, being beyond all question; the Church is to proceed immediately to censure, to vindicate the Honour of Christ and his Church, and to manifest
'to

to the World their just Indigna- 1. Tim. 5.
 tion against such Notorious Of- 24.
 fenders, and wait for a well- Act. 5. 11.
 grounded and tryed Evidence Jud. 23.
 of his true Repentance under that 1. Cor. 5.
 Ordinance of Christ which is ap- 2 Cor. 7.
 pointed to that end. 11.

Observe, It is the opinion of the Doctor, that tho the Person be penitent, yet because his Sin is open and scandalous, he ought to be cast out to vindicate the Honour of Christ and the Church, as part of his just Punishment (that being one reason of the Ordinance of Excommunication) as well as to bring the Person to thorow Repentance; and we are of his Mind. *Paul* takes no notice in the case of the *Incestuous Person* of his immediate Repentance; or if he repent not, then, &c. But says he, *deliver such a one to Satan*, &c. Saith the Lord, *if her Father had but spit in her Face, should she not be ashamed seven Days? Let her be shut out from the Camp seven Days: (speaking of Miriam) and after that let her be received in again.* Numb. 12. 14.

*Of dealing with Hereticks and
Blasphemers.*

*Of dealing
with Hereticks.*

*See Pool's
Annot. on
1 Cor. 11.
19.*

2 Pet. 2.1.

AS touching Hereticks or Heresy, the same Censure, when they are convicted, ought to pass against them; Heresy is commonly restrained to signify any perverse Opinion or Error in a fundamental Point of Religion, as to deny the Being of God, or the Deity of Christ, or his Satisfaction, and Justification alone by his Righteousness, or to deny the Resurrection of the Body, or eternal Judgment, or the like. Yet our Annotators say, the Word signifies the same thing with Schism and Divisions; which if so, such that are guilty of Schism or Divisions in the Church, ought to be excommunicated also. *Heresies* are called *Damnab*le by the Apostle *Peter*; without Repentance such cannot be saved, *as bring in Damnab*le Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them.

Two things render a Man an Heretick according to the common
fig-

signification of the Word. 1. An *Who is an*
 Error in matters of Faith, Funda- *Heretick.*
 mental or Essential to Salvation.

2. Stubbornness and Contumacy in
 holding and maintaining it. *A*
Man that is an Heretick, after the Tit. 3. 10.
first and second Admonition reject.

Now that this Rejection is all one
 with Excommunication, appears by
 what Paul speaks, 1 Tim. 1. 20.

Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexan- 1 Tim. 1.
der, whom I have delivered unto Sa- 19, 20.
tan, that they may learn not to Blas-
pheme. Their Heresy, or Blas-
phemy was in saying the Resurrec-
tion was past.

Some would have none be coun-
 ted an Heretick but he who is con-
 victed and condemned so to be in
 his own Conscience, mistaking
 Paul's Words, *Knowing that he*
that is such, is subverted, being
condemned of himself. He may be
 condemned of himself, tho not for
 his Heresy, yet for his spending
 his Time about Questions, and
 strife of Words, to the disquiet-
 ing the Peace of the Church;
 or tho not condemned of himself
 directly, yet indirectly; accord-
 ing

ing to the Purport of his own Notion, or what he grants about the Point in Debate, &c. Else the Apostle refers to some notable and notorious self-condemned Heretick. It is a great question, whether *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* were condemned in their own Consciences, about that Heresy charged upon them, and yet were delivered up to Satan. However the Rule is plain, respecting any that are subverted, and resolutely maintain any Heretical Notion, *i. e.* after he hath been twice (or oftner) admonished, that is, after all due means used, and pains taken with him, to convince him of his abominable Error; and yet if he remains obstinate, he must be delivered up to Satan; that is, the righteous censure of the Church must pass upon him, as in the case of other notorious Crimes. Heresy is a Work of the Flesh: and hence some conceive such ought to be punished by the Civil Magistrate.

Quest.

Quest. What is an Admonition?

Ans. It is a faithful endeavour to convict a Person of a Fault both as to matter of Fact, and his Duty thereupon, charging it on his Conscience in the Name of the Lord Jesus with all Wisdom and Authority.

What an admonition is.

Quest. What is a Church Admonition?

Ans. When an offending Brother rejecting private Admonition by one, or by two or three Persons, the complaint being brought to the Church by the Elder, the offending Member is rebuked and exhorted in the Name of the Lord Jesus to due Repentance; and if convicted, and he repents, the Church forgives him, otherwise casts him out, as I before shewed.

Quest. May a Church admit a Member of another Congregation to have Communion with them, without an orderly receiving him as a Member?

Ans. If the Person is well known by some of the Church, and that

that he is an orderly Member of Church of the same Faith, he being occasionally cast among them they may admit him to transien Communion for that time; but if he abides in that Town or City remote to the Church to whom he belongs, he ought to have his regular dismissal, and so be delivered up to the care and watch of the Church where he desires to communicate.

Quest. If an Excommunicated Person hath obtained of God true Repentance, and desires to be restored to the Church, what is the manner of his Reception?

The manner of the Reception of a communicate Person.

Mat. 13.

18.

2 Cor. 2. 6,

7.

1 Tim. 5.

Ans. Upon his serious, solemn and publick Acknowledgment thereof before the Church, and due Satisfaction according to the nature of his Offence being given, the Elder solemnly proceeds and declares in the Name of the Lord Jesus, that the sentence which A. B. was laid under (upon his unfeigned Repentance) is taken off, and that he is received again as a Member, &c. To the Praise and Glory of God.

Quest.

Q. How ought a *Pastor* to bealt withal, if he to the knowledge of the Church, or any Members thereof, walketh disorderly, and unworthily of his Sacred Office, and Membership?

Take the Answer of another Author here.

Ans. 'Those Members, to whom this is manifestly known, ought to go to him privately, and unknown to any others, (and with the Spirit of Meekness, in great Humility) lay his Evil before him, and intreat him as a Father, and not rebuke him as there Equal, much less as their Inferiour; and if they gain upon him, then to receive him into their former Affection and Esteem, for ever hiding it from all others. But if after all tender intreaties, he prove Refractory and Obstinate, then to bring him before the Church, and there to deal with him; they having Two or Three Witnesses in the face of the Church, to testify matter of Fact against him to their personal Knowledge.

How to proceed against a Scandalous Pastor.

2. But

C

¶ See not if
they have
none fitly
qualified, but
the Church
may call him
out,

2. ' But before he be dealt with
' they must appoint one from among
' themselves, qualifyd for the work
' a Pastor, to execute the Church
' Censure against him, &c. Yet no
doubt, the Church may Suspend him
from his Communion, & exercising
of his Office presently, upon his
being fully Convicted. But seeing
in the multitude of Counsel there is
safety, sure no Church would so pro-
ceed without the advice of the Pres-
bytery, or of a Sister-Church at least.

Q. Suppose a Member should
think himself Oppressed by the
Church; or should be Unjustly
dealt with; either Withdrawn
from, or Excommunicated, has he
no Relief left him?

Relief for a
Member un-
justly dealt
with,

Ans. We believe he hath Re-
lief; and also, that there is no
Church infallible, but may Err
in some points of Faith, as well
as in Discipline. And the way
proposed, and agreed to, in a ge-
neral Assembly, held in London
1692. of the Elders, Ministers
and Messengers of our Churches,
we approve of, which is this; viz.
The grieved or injured Person may
make his Application to a Sister

Church for Communion; and that Church may send some Brethren in their names, to that Congregation that have dealt with him, and they to see if they can possibly restore him to his place; but if they cannot, then to report the matter charged, with the Proofs, to the Church that sent them: and if that Congregation shall, after a full Information, &c. be perswaded the Person was not orderly dealt with, they may receive him into their Communion.

Of such that cause Divisions;
or Unduely separate themselves from the Church.

THis I find is generally asserted by all Congregational Divines, or worthy men, *i. e.* That no person hath power to dismember himself: *i. e.* He cannot, without great Sin, translate himself from one Church to another; but ought to have a Dismission from that Church where he is a Member: provided that Church is orderly constituted, nothing being wanting as to any Essential of Salvation; or of Church-Communion: But if not, yet he ought to in-

The cause of Disorders in the Church.

Rom, 6, 17.
Heb, 6, 2, 3

deavour to get his orderly Dismission.

Nor is every small Difference in some points of Religion, (or Notions of little moment,) any grounds for him to desire his Dismission.

That he cannot, nor ought not to Translate himself, see what Reverend Writer saith :

Dr. Chauncy
pag. 339.

"He cannot, saith he, for many Reasons :

1. 'It is not Decent, much less an Orderly going away ; but very unmannerly, and a kind of running away :

Phil. 1. 27.
Tit. 2. 10.

2. 'Such a Departure is not approved of in Families, or Civil Societies.

The great
Danger of
making a
Rent in a
Church.

3. 'It destroys the Relation of Pastor and People : For what may be done by one individual Person, may be done by all.

4. 'What Liberty in this kind belongs to the Sheep, belongs to the Shepherd ; much more he may then also leave his Flock at his Pleasure, without giving notice or reason thereof to the Church.

Rom. 1. 31.

5. It is breaking Covenant with Christ.

and it's Discipline explain'd.

4

Christ, and with the Congregation;
and therefore a great Immorality;
he being under Obligation to a-
bide steadfastly with the Church;
i. e. till the Church judge he
hath a lawful Call to go to ano-
ther Congregation.

6. 'It's a Schism: For if there
be any such thing in the World,
it's of particular Societies.

Acts 2. 42.

1 Cor. 12.

6. 14. 7. 3.

1. 20, 21,

23.

Heb. 10. 25,

Jude, 19.

7. 'It is a despising the Govern-
ment of the Church.

8. 'It is a particular Member's
'assuming to himself the use of the
'Keys; or rather stealing of them.

9. 'There is as much reason
'Persons should come into a Church
'when they please, without asking
'Consent, as depart when they
'please.

10. 'It is very evil and unkind
in another Church, to receive
such an one, as *not doing as they
would, or should be dealt with.*

11. Such Practices can issue in no-
thing else than the breach and con-
fusion of all particular Churches;
and make them like Parishes.

12. 'Such Departures cannot be
'pleaded for in the least, but up-

The Glory of a True Church

‘on the notion of a *Catholick* visible
 ‘Church, wherein all Members
 ‘and Officers are run into one
 ‘*Organized Church*, which will,
 ‘and must introduce, a Co-ordi-
 ‘nate (if not a *Subordinate*) Pa-
 ‘storal Government, by combina-
 ‘tion of *Elders*, over all the
 ‘Churches; and therefore by *Sy-*
 ‘*nods* and *Classes*.

13. ‘It is like a Leak in a Ship,
 ‘which, if not speedily stopped,
 ‘will Sink at last.

14. ‘It tends to *Anarchy*, put-
 ‘ting an *Arbitrary Power* in ev’ry
 ‘Member.

15. ‘It breaks all Bonds of Love,
 ‘and raiseth the greatest Animo-
 ‘sities between Bretheren and
 ‘Churches.

16. ‘It is a great Argument of
 ‘some Guilt lying on the Party.
 Thus the Dr.

Again he saith, ‘It is no more
 ‘in the just Power of a particular
 ‘Member to dissolve his Church-
 ‘Relation, than in a Man to kill
 ‘himself: but by his said withdraw-
 ‘ment he doth Schismatically rend
 ‘himself from his Communion, and
 ‘so

and it's Discipline explain'd.

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so Separate himself Sinfully.

* Jude 19.

Quest. *What is the just Act of the Church, that cloathes this irregular Separation, with the Formality as it were of an Excommunication.*

1. Cor. 1. 10.

& 3. 3. &

11. 18.

Heb. 10. 22.

23, 25.

He Answers. (*Calling*) this a mixt Excommunication i. e. Originally proceeding from, and consists in, the act of the Brother himself, and is the Formality of his Offence; upon which proceeds the just and unviolable act of the Church.

The Judgment of the Church publicly declared by the Elder of the Congregation; as the Dr. words it; viz.

That A. B. having so and so irregularly and sinfully withdrawn himself from the Communion of the Congregation, we do now adjudge him a Non-member, and one that is not to Communicate with the Church, in the special Ordinances of Communion, till due Satisfaction is given by him.

Mixt Excommunication.

Rom. 19,

17, 18.

2 Thes. 3.

6. 14, 15.

Jude 12.

Yet we believe, as the Dr's Opinion is, that a Church may, (if they find the Case to be warranted

by the Word of God; or as it may be circumstanced) give a dismission to a Member, when insisted on, to another regular Church, tho not in every case of small Offence, or dissent in some small points of different Notions, or from Prejudice; for that may tend soon to dissolve any Church: For what Church is it, where every Member is of one mind in every particular case and thing about Notions of Religion? And such that make Divisions, and cause Schisms, or Discord among Brethren, to disturb the Peace of the Church, if they cannot be reclaimed, must be marked, and dealt with as great Offenders: It being one of those things that God hates, and is an abomination to him.

Let none call the Church a Prison, since all do voluntarily Covenant with it, and 'tis dangerous to break Christ's bonds.

2 Tim. 2.

23.

2 Thes. 3.

14.

Prov. 6. 16.

Quest. What is a full and lawful Dismission of a Member to another Church, upon his removing his Habitation, or on other warranted Cases.

Ans. VVe answer a Letter Testimonial, or Recommendation of the Person; and if he intends to abide there wholly, to give him

Of a Letter of Recommendation.

up

up to that *Communion*, and *Fellowship*, to be watched over in the Lord.

Rom 16.

1. 2.

Acts 18. 27.

Of Disorders, or causes of Disorders, and how to be prevented, corrected, and removed.

I. **O**NE cause of Discord is, through the Ignorance in some Members of the Rules of Discipline, and right Government; particularly when that Rule in *Matth. 18.* is not followed.

Mat. 18. 15.

Disorders
Corrected &
Removed.

But one Person takes up an Offence against another, and speaks of it to this or that Person, before he hath told the Brother offending of it, which is a papable Sin, and a direct violation of Christ's holy Precept: and such must, as Offenders themselves, be in a Gospel-way dealt with.

To prevent this, the Discipline of the Church should be taught; and the Members informed of their Duties.

II. Another thing that causes Trouble and Disorder in a Church,

C

is want of Love, and tender Affections to one another ; as also not having a full sight and sense of the great evil of breaking *the Bonds of Peace, and Unity* : O that all would lay this abominable *Evil* to Heart, how base a thing it is to break the Peace of a private Family, or Neighbourhood ; but much more sinful to disturb the Peace of the Church of the living God, and *break the bonds of the Unity thereof*. Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in *Unity* ! But, O how ugly and hateful is the contrary !

III. Another disorderly Practice is this, When one Member or another knows of some sinful act, or evils done by one or more Members, and they conceal it ; or do not act according to the Rule ; pretending they would not be lookt upon as Contentious Persons : but hereby they may become guilty of other Mens Sins, and also suffer the Name of God, and the Church, to lye under Reproach, and all thro their neglect. This is a great Iniquity.

IV. When

John 13. 12,

17,

Eph. 4. 3.

Heb. 13. 1.

Eph. 4. 31,

32.

& cap. 5. 2.

Psal. 132. 1.

Jam. 3. 16.

Acts 5. 3. 8.

Levit. 19.

12.

IV. When an Elder, or Church shall know that some persons are Scandalous in their Lives, or Heretical in Judgment, and yet shall bear or connive with them.

V. When Members take liberty to hear at other Places, when the Church is assembled to worship God : this is nothing less than a breaking their Covenant with the Church, and may soon dissolve any Church : For by the same Rule, one may take that liberty, another ; nay, every Member may. Moreover, it casts a Contempt upon the Ministry of the Church, and tends to cause such who are Hearers to draw off, and to be Disaffected with the Doctrine taught in the Church, (they knowing these Dissenters do belong unto it.) I exhort therefore, in the Name of Christ, this may be prevented : And any of you that know who they are, that take this Liberty, pray discover them to the Church. We lay no restraint upon our Members from hearing such, who are sound in the Faith at other times.

Acts, 4. 23.

VJ. The

VI. The Liberty that some take to hear Men that are corrupt in their Judgments; and so take in unsound Notions, and also strive to distil them into the Minds of others, as if they were of great Importance. Alas, how many are Corrupted in these days, with *Arminianism*, *Socinianism*, and what not! This causes great trouble and disorder.

Pet. 2. 2.

VII. When one Church shall receive a Member or Members of another Congregation without their Consent or Knowledge: Nay such that are Disorderly and may be loose Livers, or cast out for Immorality; or Persons filled with Prejudice without cause. This is enough to make Men Atheists, or condemn all Church Authority, and Religion: For hath not one regular Church as great Authority from Christ as another.

Acts 9. 27.

VIII. Another disorder is, when Members are received without the general Consent of the Church; or before good Satisfaction is taken of their Godly Lives, and Conversations: Or when a Church is too remiss in the reception of her Members.

IX. Ano-

IX. Another disorder is, when a Church shall receive a charge against a Member, (it being an Offence between Brother and Brother) before an orderly proceed has been made by the offended Person. Mat. 18. 15.

X. When Judgment passes with Partiality; some are connived at, out of favour or affection: *Levi* was not to know his *Father* or *Mother* in Judgment.

XI. When Members do not constantly and early attend our publick Assemblies, and the worship of God on the Lord's-day especially, but are remiss in that matter: This is a great Evil. Psal. 63. 1.
Cant. 7. 12.
Mark 16. 1.

XII. When part of a Church shall meet together as dissatisfied, to consult Church-matters, without the knowledge or consent of the Church, or Pastor: This is disorderly, and tends to division; and such should be marked. 1 Cor. 13.
25.
Romans 16.
17.

XIII. Another thing that tends to disquiet the Peace of the Church is, when there are any undue heats of Spirit, or Passion shewed in

2 Tim. 2. 25. in the Pastor, or others, in managing the Discipline of the Church. Have we not found by experience the sad effect of this? Therefore things must be always managed with coolness, and sweetness of Spirit, and moderation; every Brother having liberty to speak his mind, and not to be interrupted, until he has done; nor above one speak at once.

XIV. When one Brother or more Dissents in the sentiments of their Minds from the Church, in any matters circumstantial; either in respect of Faith, Practice, or Discipline, and will not submit to the Majority, but raise Feuds; nay, will rend themselves from the Church, rather than consent.

Jude, 19.

Jam. 3. 14.

16.

Query, what reason, or ground, hath any Man to refuse Communion with a Church that Christ hath not left, but hath Communion with?

XV. When any Member shall divulge, or make known to Persons, not of the Congregation, nor being concerned in those matters

ters, what is done in Church-meetings, the Church in this respect (as well as in others) is to be as a *Garden inclosed, a Spring shut up, a Fountain sealed*. This oft times occasions great Grief, and the disorderly Person should be detected. Is it not a shame to any of a private Family, to divulge the Secrets of the Family? But far greater shame do these expose themselves unto.

Cant. 4. 12.

XVI. Another disorderly Practice is this; viz. When a Member shall suggest, and seem to insinuate into the minds of other Members some evil against their Pastor, yet will not declare what it is; and may only be evil Surmifings, & out of Prejudice; and yet refuses to acquaint the Pastor with what it is: This is very abominable, and a palpable violation of the Rule of the Gospel, and Duty of Members to their Minister. Such a person ought to be severely rebuk'd; and if he confess not his Evils, and manifesteth unfeigned Repentance, to be dealt with farther. Moreover, it is a great evil

Rom. 1. 29.

1 Tim. 6. 4.

Zech. 7. 10.

1 Tim. 5. 19

vil in another to hear such base
 Insinuations, and neither rebuke
 the Accuser, and so discharge his
 Duty, nor take two or three more
 to bring the Person to Repen-
 tance. If he deal thus by a pri-
 vate Brother, it is a great Evil,
 but far worse to an Elder, whose
 Name and Honour, ought with
 all Care and Justice, to be kept
 up, as being more Sacred.

1 Timo. 5.
 12.

XVII. Another disorderly Pra-
 ctice is, (which causes much trou-
 ble) When the publick Charges
 of a Church are not equally born;
 but some too much burdened,
 when others do but little or no
 thing.

1 Cor. 8. 14.

1 Cor. 16. 2.

And also, when every one does
 not Contribute to the Poor, as
 God has blessed them, on every
 Lord's-day, or first day of the
 Week, as he hath Commanded.

Matth. 18.

XVIII. Another disorder is this,
 When Members refuse to com-
 municate with the Church at the
 Lord's-table, because some person
 or persons, they think are guilty
 of Evil, and yet they have not
 proceeded with them according to
 Rule.

Rule : These either Excommunicate the Church, or themselves; or those Persons at least, they censure unwarrantably.

I beseech you for Christ's sake, that this may never be any more among you : You ought not to deal thus with them ; or refuse your Communion, (tho faulty) until the Church has dismember'd, or withdrawn from them ; or at least Suspended them.

XIX. When one Member, shall believe, or receive a report against another, before he knows the truth of the matter. Jer. 20. 10.

XX. When an Accusation is brought against an Elder, contrary to the Rule, which ought not be without two or three Witnesses, as to the matter of Fact. 1 Tim. 5. 19.

XXI. When the word of God is not carefully attended upon, on Week, or Lecture-days, by the Members generally ; tho the said Meeting being appointed by the whole Church. Isa. 55. 3.
Acts 2, 1, 2.
Acts, 10, 33.

XXII. VWhen Days of Prayer and Fasting, and of publick Thanks-giving, Joel 2, 16.

giving, or when days of Disciplining are not generally attended upon.

Lastly, VVhen Gifted Brethren are not duely encouraged: First privately to exercise their Gifts; and being in time approved, called forth to Preach or Exercise in the Church: And when encouragment is not given to bestow Learning also upon them, for their better Accomplishment. What will become of the Churches in time to come, if this be not prevented with speed?

What tends to the Glory and Beauty of a true Gospel Church.

What tends to the Glory of a Church of Christ.

1 Cor. 3, 4.

I. **T**HAT which Primarily tends to the Glory of a Church is the Foundation on which it is Built, which is Jesus Christ. Now this is a blessed and glorious Foundation.

1. In respect of God the Father, who laid this Foundation in his eternal Purpose, Counsel, and Decree; Behold I lay in Sion, and this is as the result of his

Isa. 28. 16.

infinite Wisdom, Love, and Mercy to his Elect.

II. In respect had unto Christ himself, who is this Foundation.

1. He is a Suitable Foundation;

1. In respect to the Glory of God in all his Attributes.

2ly. In respect to our Good ; he answering all our wants, who are united to him, or built upon him.

3. In respect of the preciousness of Christ, as a Foundation ; a Stone ; a precious Stone.

4. In respect to the Durableness of it *i. e.* a tryed Stone ; a sure Foundation. Isa. 28. 16.

Brethren, a Foundation of a House must of necessity be laid ; no House can be built without a good Foundation, that will stand firm, and unmovable ; it is the strongest part of the Building, and it beareth all the weight of the whole Superstructure : So doth Jesus Christ.

III. The Beauty and Glory of a true Church, consists in the true and regular, or right Constitution of it ; nothing being wanting

ing that is Essential to it, upon this account.

IV. It consisteth in the Excellency, Glory, and Suitableness of the materials 'tis Built with, answering to the Foundation, all precious Stones, lively Stones; all regenerated Persons.

1 Pet. 2, 5, 6.

V. In that all the Stones be well Hewed and Squared; all made fit for the Building, before laid in. VVere it thus, there would not be so great a Noise of the Hammer and Ax, in Church Discipline, as indeed there is. It was not thus in the Type, I mean in Solomon's Temple.

1 Kings 6, 7.

VI. It's Beauty and Glory consisteth in that all the Stones being not only united by the Spirit, to Christ the Foundation, but also to one another in sincere Love and Affection. In whom all the Building, fully Framed together, groweth up into an holy Temple in the Lord.

Eph. 2, 19, 20, 21.

VII. It consisteth in the Holiness and Purity of the Lives and Conversations of all the Members: Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.

1 Pet, 1, 16,

and it's Discipline explain'd.

57

ly. Holiness becomes thy House,
O God, for Ever.

Psalm 93. 5.

VIII. It consisteth in that sweet Union and Concord that ought to be in the Church ; all like the Horses in Pharoah's Chariot, drawing together : Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. By this shall all Men know ye are my Disciples, if you Love one another.

Cant. 1. 9.

Eph. 4. 3.

IX. In their having the divine Presence with them : Or when the Glory of God fills his Temple.

Exod. 20. 24.

Mat. 18, 20,

X. In keeping out all un sanctified, or unclean Persons, or if they get in, to purge them out by a strict and holy Discipline, or else it will soon loose it's Beauty.

1 Cor. 5. 5,

6. 7.

XI. In that Zeal and Equality that should be shewed in all to keep up the Honour, Peace, and Comfort of the Church, and the Ministry thereof.

2 Cor. 8. 14.

Tit. 3. 2.

XII. In the Administration of right Discipline ; to see no neglect nor delaying of Justice, thro carelesness, or Partiality : (1.) No ways partaking of other Mens Sins ; which may be done by
Con-

Conniving at it ; (2.) By Lessening or Extenuating of it (3.) By Countenancing, or any ways Encouraging any in Sin. (4.) By not Restoring a Brother, that confesses his Sin when overtaken. (5.) Not bringing in a just Charge against an Offender, nor rebuking him ; and yet have Communion with him.

2ly. Not to wrest Judgment, out of it's true and right Channel : Nor to inflict a greater censure than the Law of Christ requires on any.

3ly. Timely to acquit, and discharge a penitent Person.

4ly. Not to do any thing out of Prejudice, but in Love, and Bowels, of affection ; and to do all in Christ's Name, or by his authority.

XIII. To Sympathize with the Afflicted, Succour the Tempted, and Relieving the Poor and Distressed : Rejoicing with them that Rejoice, and Mourning with them that Mourn.

XIV. To speak evil of no Man, not only speaking no evil of their Bre-

Brethren, but of no *Man*, to his hurt or injury, detracting from his Worth and Honour: See *Sirach*, *Whether it be to Friend or Foe, talk not of other Men's Lives; and if thou canst, without Offence, reveal them not.* We must not discourse his Faults, unless in a Gospel-way; and that too, to amend the Person, and not out of Passion, or Prejudice to expose him, but out of Love to his Soul. Yet we may speak of the evils of others, (1.) When called to do it, in a Legal or Gospel-way; and it is a Sin then to conceal his Crime. (2.) Or when it is to prevent another, who is in danger to be Infected by his *Company*, or ill Example. (3.) Or in our own just *Defence* and *Vindication*. Moreover, consider the evil of *Reproaching* of others.

First as to the causes why some do it.

1. One Cause is from want of Love: Nay from Malice; and Hatred.

Ecc. 19. 8.
Apoc.

1. From

1. From the Baseness, ill Nature, and Cruelty of the accusers *Disposition*.

2. 'Tis occasioned from that itch, of talking and meddling in the *Affairs* of other Men.

3. Or perhaps to raise their own Esteem and Honour, some *Degrade* their Brother ; which is *Abominable*.

Consider it is *Theft*, or *Robbery* ; nay, and 'tis worse than to Rob a Man of his Goods, because thou takest away that which perhaps thou canst not restore again.

Moreover consider, That such who reproach others, lay themselves open thereby to Reproach.

3. Moreover know, he that Receives, or Harkens to the Scandal, is as Guilty as the *Accuser* ; he is like a Person that receives Stolen Goods, and so is as bad as the Thief.

This being one of the Grand and Notorious Evils of these *Days* I speak the more to it.

If you abominate this evil, and avoid it, you will shine in *Grace* and

and Vertue the more clearly.

Alas, in our days, some that would be thought to be great Professors stick not to vilifie Christ's Ministers, even some of the best of Men; and are so full of Malice, they care not what wrong they do to their Brethren, nor to the truth it self, or interest of God, and so expose themselves to a lasting shame, and their Spirit, and Practice, to an abhorrance; they are like cursed *Cham* who discovered his Fathers nakedness; these persons violate all Laws, both Humane and Divine.

3 John 9. 10

Gen. 9. 22

3ly. When they bear one anothers Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ: And that you may do this; consider where is that Church in which there are no Burdens to be Born.

Gal. 6. 2

[*Motives thus to do.*]

1. Consider what a Burden Jesus Christ hath born for thee.

2. What a Burden thou hast to bear of thine own.

2 Gal. 6. 5

D 4. May't

3. Mayst not thou in some things be a Burden to thy Brethren ?

4. Wouldst thou not have others bear thy Burden.

5. May not God cause thee to bear a more heavy Burden ; because thou canst not bear thy Brother's ?

Rom. 3. 10.

6. 'Tis a fulfilling the Law of Love, nay the Law of Christ.

XV. The Glory and Beauty of a Congregation, is the more manifest, when the Authority of the Church, and the Dignity of the Pastoral Office is maintained. How great was the Evil of the gain-saying of Corah ? The Apostles speaks of some that are Selfwilled, Presumptuous, who are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities.

Eccl. 11.

Numb. 22.

7, 21.

God has put a Glory and high Dignity upon the Church and in it's Authority and Power ; Where ye bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven.

Mat. 18. 10

in Heaven.

More

and it's Discipline display'd.

63

Moreover, the Pastoral Office, is an Office of Dignity; they are called *Rulers, Angels, Fathers*: For any therefore to cast contempt on the Church, or Pastor, is a great evil, and a reproach to Christ, and tends to Disorder and Confusion.

Rev. 2. 1.

1 Tim. 3. 5.

Act. 23. 5.

Lastly, When Holiness, Righteousness, Charity, Humility, and all true Piety is prest upon the Consciences of every Member, and appears in the Minister: also that all strive to excell therein, with their uttermost Care and Diligences.

Psal. 110. 3.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

The Conclusion.

K Now my Brethren, That God loves the Gates of Sion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob: Therefore the publick Worship of God ought to be preferred before private.

Psal. 87. 2.

1. This supposeth there must be a visible Church.

D 2

2 And

The Glory of a True Church,

2. And that they frequently meet together to worship God.

3. That they have an orderly Ministry and one ordained Elder, at least, to administer all Publick Ordinances.

4. Moreover, that all Persons have free liberty to assemble with the Church, and to partake of all Ordinances, save those which peculiarly belong to the Church; as the Lord's Supper, holy Discipline, and days of Prayer and Fasting. Then the Church of Old separated themselves from all Strangers.

Neh. 1. 2.

How should
Sinners else
be. Convert-
ed, and the
Church in-
creased.

Yet others may attend on all other publick Ordinances with the Church; as publick Prayer, Reading, and Preaching the Word, and in Singing God's Praises, as hath formerly been proved. May others my Brethren, join in Prayer with us, and not praise God with us.

But, O my Brethren! let me beseech you to shew your high Value

Value, and Estimation for the
publick Worship of God.

[*Motives hereunto.*]

1. Since God prefers it thus :
Or has so great Esteem of his
publick Worship.

2. Because he is said to dwell
in *Sion* ; *It is his Habitation for
ever.* The place, where his Ho-
nour dwells.

*Pfal. 132. 13.
Pfal. 26. 8.*

3. Here God is most Glorified.
In his Temple every one speaks
of his Glory ; *My Praise shall
be in the great Congregation.*

Pfal. 29. 9.

4. Here is most of God's gra-
cious presence (as one observes it.)

1. His effectual Presence, in
all Places ; *Where I record my* *Exod. 20. 24.*
Name, thither will I come ; and
there will I bless thee.

2. Here is More of his intimate
presence : *Where two or three are*
gathered together in my Name, *Mat. 18. 20.*
there am I in the midst of them.

66 *The Glory of a True Church;*

Rev. 1. 13. *He walks in the midst of the seven Golden Candlesticks.*

5. Here are the clearest manifestations of God's Beauty, which made holy *David* desire to dwell there for ever. See the appearance of Christ to the Churches, Rev. 2. cap. 3.

6. In that it is said, that those that should be Saved, in the Apostles days, God added unto the Church.

Acts 2. 47.

7. Here is most Spiritual Advantage to be got : *Here the Dew of Hermon fall, they descend upon the Mountain of Zion.*

Psal. 132. 3. *Here God commands the Blessing, even Life for evermore. I will*

Psal. 130. 15. *abundantly bless her Provision, and satisfy her Poor with Bread. Here*

Psal. 73. 16. *David's Doubt was resolved.*

Psal. 87. 5. 8. Here you received your first spiritual-Breath, or Life, many Souls are daily Born to Christ. That good which is most Diffusive, is to be Preferred ; but that good which most partake of, is most Diffusive ; O magnifie the Lord,

Lord with me ! let us exalt his Name together. Live Coals separated, soon die. Psal. 34. 3.

9. Brethren (as a worthy *Divine* observes) the Church in her publick Worship is the nearest Resemblance of Heaven, especially in Singing God's Praises. What Esteem also had God's Worthies of old, for God's publick VVorship ? *My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts !* Psal. 84. 1, 2.

10. See how the Promises of God run to Sion, or to his Church : *Isaiah 35. He will bless thee out of Sion.* O let nothing discourage you in your waiting at the Posts of Christ's Door ; *David desired Rather to be a Door-Keeper in the House of God, than to Dwell in the Tents of Wickedness.* Yet Psal. 128. 3. nevertheless do not neglect, for the Lord's sake, private Devotion ; viz. Secret, and Family-Prayer : O pray to be fitted for publick Worship ! Come out of Isai. 51. 3.
Prov. 8. 34.
Psal. 26. 14. your Psal. 87. 4.
Mat. 6. 6.

68 *The Glory of a True Church,*

Jer. 10. 25. your Closets to the Church?
What signifies all you do in
Publick, if you are not such that
keep up the Worship of God in
your own Families?

O neglect not Prayer, Read-
ing, and Meditation! And take
care also to Educate and Cate-
chise your *Children*; and live as
Men and Women *that are dead*
to this World: and walk for
the Lord's sake as becomes the
Gospel.

Eph. 6. 4.
Phil. 1. 27.

See that Zeal and Knowledge
go together; a good *Conversation*.
and a good *Doctrine* go together
These Two together, are better
than One.

Brethren, he that makes the
VVord of God his Rule, in what
soever he doth, and the Glory of
God his end in what he doth,
shall have the Spirit of God to
be his strength. This is like So-
lomon's Three-fold Cord, that will
be One, or it will be Three; it
can't be Two; nor can it be
broken.

Ecc. 4. 9.
10. 11. 12.
13.

The Solemn Covenant of
the Church of Christ, meeting
in *White-street*, at it's Constitu-
tion; *June, 5. 1696.*

WE who desire to walk together
in the Fear of the Lord, do,
through the Assistance of his Holy
Spirit, profess our deep and serious
Humiliation for all our Transgressi-
ons. And we do also solemnly, in the
Presence of God, of each other, in
the Sense of our own Unworthiness,
give up our selves to the Lord, in a
Church state according to the Aposto-
tolical Constitution that he may be
our God, and we may be his People,
through the Everlasting Covenant of
his Free grace, in which alone we
hope to be accepted by him, through
his blessed Son Jesus Christ, whom
we take to be our High Priest, to ju-
stify and sanctify us, and our Prophet
to teach us; and to subject to him as
our Law-giver, and the King of
Saints; and to conform to all his Ho-
ly Laws and Ordinances, for our Church-
growth, Establishment, and Consola-
tion; that we may be as a Holy Spouse

Ezek. 16. 6.

8.

2 Cor. 8. 3.

Hos. 2. 23.

2 Cor. 6. 16.

Church-
Communion
proved.

The Glory of a True Church,
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Church-
Communion
proved.

unto him, and serve him in our Generation, and wait for his second Appearance, as our glorious Bridegroom.

Being fully satisfied in the way of Church-Communion, and the Tradition of Grace in some good measure upon one anothers Spirits, we do solemnly join our selves together in a Holy Communion and Fellowship, humbly submitting to the Discipline of the Gospel, and all Holy Duties required of a People in such a spiritual Relation.

1. We do promise and engage to walk in all Holiness, Godliness, Humility, and Brotherly Love, as much as in us lieth to render our Communion delightful to God, comfortable to our selves, and lovely to the rest of the Lord's People.

2. We do promise to watch over each others Conversations, and not to suffer Sin upon one another, so far as God shall discover it to us, or any of us; and to stir up one another to Love and good Works; to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another with Meekness according to the Rules left to us of Christ in that Behalf.

3. We do promise in an especial manner to pray for one another, and

Exod. 26. 3.
4. 6.

Isa. 62. 5.

Psal. 132. 3.

Eph. 2. 23.

Eph. 4. 16.

1 Pet. 2. 5.

Psal. 93. 5.

Isa. 55. 8.

Luke 1. 74.

75.

2 Cor. 7. 1.

1 Tim. 6. 11.

2 Pet. 1. 6.

7.

Act. 20. 19.

Phil. 2. 3.

Ich. 13. 34.

and 15. 12.

1 Pet. 1. 22.

Lev. 19. 17.

Heb. 10. 24.

25.

1 Theff. 5.

14. 15.

Rom. 15.

Eph. 6. 18.

Lam. 3. 16.

for the Glory and Increase of this Col, 4, 12,
Church, and for the Presence of
God in it, and the pouring forth of
his Spirit on it, and his Protection
over it to his Glory.

4. We do promise to bear one ano- Cal, 6, 2,
others Burdens, to cleave to one ano- Heb, 12, 12,
ther, and to have a Fellow-feeling Heb, 13, 3,
with one another, in all Conditions Rom, 12, 15,
both outward and inward, as God in 2 Cor, 11,
his Providence shall cast any of us into 29

5. We do promise to bear with one 1 Iohn 3,
an others Weakness, Failings, and 17, 18,
Infirmities, with much Tenderness, Gal 6, 1,
not discovering to any without the 1 Thess, 5,
Church, nor any within, unless ac- 14,
cording to Christ's Rule, and the Or- Rom, 15, 12,
der of the Gospel provided in that Eph, 4, 31,
case. 32,

6. We do promise to strive toge- Jude, v, 8,
ther for the Truths of the Gospel, Gal, 5, 1,
and Purity of God's Ways and Or- Tit, 3, 9, 10,
dinances, to avoid Causes, and 2 Iohn v, 10,
Causers of Division, endeavouring
to keep the Unity of the Spirit in
the Bond of Peace; Ephel 4 3.

7 We do promise to meet together Heb 3, 10,
on Lord's Days, and at other times, and 10, 25,
as the Lord shall give us Opportuni- Mal, 3, 16,
ties, to serve and glorify God in the Rom, 14, 18
way, and 15, 16,

(74.)
way of his Worship, to edify one another, and to contrive the good of his Church.

8. We do promise according to our Ability (or as God shall bless us with the good things of this World) to Communicate to our Pastor or Minister, God having ordained that they that Preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. (And now can any thing lay a greater obligation upon the Conscience, than this Covenant, what then is the Sin of such who violate it?)

These and all other Gospel-Duties we humbly submit unto, promising and purposing to perform, not in our own Strength, being conscious of our own Weakness, but in the Power and Strength of the Blessed God, whose we are, and whom we desire to serve: To whom be Glory now and for evermore. Amen.

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